Family stress and children’s well-being

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Uplifting families... one study at a time
Outline

1. Broaden what we consider family adversity & stress
2. What’s happening in families on a day-to-day basis?
3. Extend this research to families raising a child with autism spectrum disorder
4. Two take-home tips
Motivating Research Question

How does our family environment shape our mental health?
Family stressors in everyday life

• Marital Conflict

• Parental depressive symptoms/mood

• Poor quality sleep
How do you get from stress to child outcomes?

What’s going on in the daily lives of families?
Marital and Parent-child Relationship Quality

• Study of 203 families

### Marital and Parent-child Relationship Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Spillover</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Compensatory</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Study of 55 couples

- Rate items on a 5-point scale, taken from PANAS-X (Watson & Clark, 1994)
  - Positive
    - Happy, Joyful, Delighted, Cheerful
    - Excited, enthusiastic, lively, energetic
  - Soft Negative Affect
    - Afraid, scared, frightened
    - Nervous, jittery, shaky
    - Sad, blue, downhearted
    - Alone, lonely
  - Hard Negative Affect
    - Angry, hostile irritable

Daily Emotions

• Study of 55 couples

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Daily Emotions

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive Emotion</th>
<th>Sad &amp; Afraid Emotions</th>
<th>Angry Emotion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Husbands</strong></td>
<td>![Checkmark] Assume Similarity</td>
<td>![Checkmark]</td>
<td>Assume Similarity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wives</strong></td>
<td>![Checkmark] Assume Similarity</td>
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Extending research to ASD community

Why is it important to study children with autism spectrum disorder?

- Their families experience unique challenges and stress
- Children with ASD have elevated internalizing symptoms
Extending research to ASD community

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Couples & Kids with Autism Project
Take-home Tips to Promote Positive Family and Child Well-being

• Be mindful of your daily family interactions

• Participate in family research studies!
  • You are the expert!
  • Coming Soon! SMU Families Helping Families Research Registry